

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 44

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DEVARIM

9th AV 5776

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 1, verses 1 - 10

- ✚ On the first day of the eleventh month in the fortieth year, wandering through the midbar (desert), Bnai Israel were encamped on the eastern bank of the Jordan River on the verge of entering the land of Canaan.
- ✚ Knowing his death was imminent Moshe begins his final monologue as their leader.
- ✚ Cleverly disguised by recalling all the places Bnai Yisrael had been to over the past thirty nine years, Moshe delivers a harsh rebuke towards his people for their past misdemeanours which prevented them all from conquering the land much sooner, after Matan Torah (The giving of the Torah) itself.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 1, verses 11 - 21

- ✚ At that time Moshe felt he could no longer lead them single handed, which was why he decided to appoint judges to help ease his burdens. Moshe implored the judges not to show any favouritism or be afraid of anyone as he needed them to judge righteously; but if they felt that any case would be too difficult for whatever reason, then the case had to be presented to him, to decide upon the final verdict.
- ✚ Upon leaving Horev and reaching Kadesh Barnea (Canaan's Southern Border), disaster occurred.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 1, verses 22 - 35

- ✚ Moshe told his beloved people to remain brave and not to lose heart but instead they requested that one man from each tribe should go and spy out the Promised Land first.
- ✚ Even though they came back with glowing reports about the fertility of the land, Bnai Yisrael rebelled against Moshe because they listened to all the negatively relating to how the land could never be conquered, because the current inhabitants dwelling in Canaan were too strong.
- ✚ Hashem became angry and swore that none of that generation apart from Caleb and Yehoshua (Joshua) will enter the land.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 1, verse 36 - Chapter 2, verse 1

- ✚ When the people heard this and although they were warned by Hashem from doing so, a group of them rebelled once more and rushed into the land, only to be defeated and killed by the Amorites.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 2, verses 2 - 30

- ✚ Moshe recounts how thirty eight years later the next generation were being instructed by Hashem not to provoke the Edomites as they crossed the land of Seir in order to get to Israel because Hashem had given Seir to Esav as an inheritance. However Bnai Yisrael were given permission to buy provisions of water and food from them.
- ✚ Since Lot was also given the land where the nations of Moab and Ammon dwelt as an inheritance from Hashem. Bnai Yisrael were not permitted to conquer their land either.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 2, verse 31 – Chapter 3, verse 14

- ✚ Moshe recalls how both the Amorite King 'Sihon' and the King of Bashan 'Og' refused Bnai Yisrael entry into their lands and instead led their men into battle only to be defeated by Bnai Yisrael's army.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 3, verses 15 - 22

- ✚ These lands were then given and split up between the tribes of Reuven, Gad and half of Menashe's tribe to dwell; on the condition they would assist in conquering the rest of the land of Israel first.

Haftorah – Yishayah (Isaiah) Chapter 1 verses 1 to 27

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Yishayah relives his vision he experienced to the Jewish nation, chastising the residents of Judah and Jerusalem for having rebelled against Hashem and not abandoning their sinful ways.
- ✚ Yishayah, attempts to encourage the people to repent sincerely and to perform acts of kindness especially towards the needy; promising them the best of the land in return for their obedience, making them ready for the Messianic era.

GEMATRIA LINKED TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ Most of the book of Devarim, consists of a collection of Moshe's final speeches of criticism and hope which he gave before he passed away.
- ✚ The Sedra begins with 'אלה הדברים אלה' Aileh Ha'Devarim' (These are the words). The Gematria of אלה Aileh is 36; corresponding to the number of days Moshe spoke.
- ✚ Interestingly Megilla איכה Eicha which is read on Tish B'Av, that also reflects on the same theme of criticizing and hope has the same numerical value of 36.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Parsha's Devarim is always read on the Shabbos right before the fast of Tisha B'Av. This is purposefully done in order that Moshe's admonition to Bnai Yisrael coincided with the saddest day of our history. As we know, a lot of bad things occurred to us 'The Jewish people' on this date, for example it was on the 9th of Av when the spies returned back from their mission with an evil report of the land of Israel, Both the first and the second Beis Hamigdosh's were destroyed on this exact day, hundreds of years apart. The Crusades began on this day in 1095. We were expelled out of England on this day in 1290 and again expelled later on out of Spain and Portugal on the very same day in 1492. to name a just a few!...

The question I have today is why it is necessary for this specific reprimand by Moshe in Parsha's Devarim to be read in conjunction with the mourning period preceding Tisha B'Av.? After all, the tochacha (Admonitions of our ancestor's failures) of Parsha's Va'etchanan, which is read on Tisha B'Av itself, appears in next week's Torah reading.

I think that the answer lies in the unique and exact content and context of Moshe's words in this week's Parsha of Devarim. The overall structure delineates the circumstances in which Bnai Yisrael find themselves at the end of the book of Bamidbar. The previous generation had all but died out as a result of the 'Sin of the spies'. If not for that event, they all would have already been residing in land of Israel for 38 years, reaping in the benefits that Hashem had promised them. However, instead due to the Sin, entry to the land was delayed, and the old generation became mostly extinct.

Moshe therefore had no choice but to address this present generation from this perspective, devoting most of the Parsha to the grave transgression the spies committed to provide a context of why they, the next generation are in the position they are in now. Moshe felt duty-bound to let them know where they were headed prior to the Sin, and to explain the eternal ramifications of which the Sin precipitated. The masses cried in vain as a result of the spies' false report presented on the night of Tisha B'Av, changing our Jewish destiny forever, turning from what would have been a day of future celebrations and joy to a day filled with many tragedies and despair.

This is precisely why we read Moshe's rebuke of Parsha Devarim on the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av. We are again being reminded that the present situation in which we find ourselves. Living a Jewish destiny filled with golus and suffering is the domino effect caused by the grievous transgressions of long ago. Moshe's rebuke towards Bnai Yisrael wasn't said out of malice because he held them responsible for his own downfall but was delivered out of love. Inspiring them that despite having to face the consequences of their ancestor's mistakes. They, the next generation have the opportunity to change things for the better.

Yes, it's true that Tisha B'Av marked the beginning of a chain of events which caused great suffering to our people over the course of thousands of years but we as a unified people have the ability to turn it around. May we soon merit to find ourselves in the fulfilled context of Eicha and Moshe's prayers as we patiently await the final realignment in our future destiny with the coming of the Moshiach and bringing with it our final redemption.

